World Chronicle

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UN PEACEKEEPING OPERATIONS

Increasingly, peacekeeping operations are complex or multi-disciplinary in nature. As a result, coordination by the United Nations system is essential to ensure unity of effort in the maintenance of peace and security. This need has become more pronounced as the Organization's focus shifts from inter-state conflicts to complex crises arising from internal conflicts. The increasing use of multi-disciplinary peacekeeping operations, which combine military tasks with humanitarian assistance and peace-building activities, is a result of this development. On this episode of **World Chronicle**, Under-Secretary-General Bernard Miyet, from the United Nations' Department of Peacekeeping Operations, discusses the new challenges facing peacekeepers now and in the future.

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ANNOUNCER: From United Nations Headquarters in New York, this is **World Chronicle**, an unedited interview programme about major global issues.

Here now to introduce our guest is the host of today's **World Chronicle**.

LITTLEJOHNS: I'm Michael Littlejohns, and this is **World Chronicle**.

Peacekeeping operations are normally set up by the Security Council, the United Nations' organ with primary responsibility for maintaining international peace and security. The Council decides the operation's size, its overall objectives and its time frame. As the UN has no military or civilian police force of its own, Member States decide whether to participate in a mission and, if so, what personnel and equipment they are willing to offer. For a peacekeeping operation to succeed, it needs a clear and practicable mandate, effective command at headquarters and in the field, the sustained political and financial support of Member States, and, perhaps most important, the cooperation of the conflicting parties. Our guest today is an expert in these issues. He is Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet. Joining me to talk with Mr. Miyet are Linda Fasulo of *NBC News* and Raghida Dergham of *Al-Hayat of London*.

Mr. Miyet, welcome to **World Chronicle**.

Mr. Miyet, the peacekeeping business is suddenly moving up after a period when you weren't as active as you might have wished to be, what accounts for this sudden interest in peacekeeping? Why are governments suddenly coming to the UN to have the UN involved in peacekeeping operations?

MIYET: In brief, I would say do we have any other choice which appears to be reliable, credible and effective? And I think after a few years of frustrations with the United Nations, or interrogations, on its capacity, everyone came to realize that it was the place where for these kinds of operations you had the only tool available.

LITTLEJOHNS: So would you say this is sort of a tribute to the efficiency of UN peacekeeping?

MIYET: I won't say this. I would say there are strength and weaknesses in the UN peacekeeping operations and we still have a lot of progress to make to improve our operations. But you cannot find any other organization able to do it. So let's try to be at the same time modest and ambitious which is to draw on the lessons of the past and to be prepared for the future.

LITTLEJOHNS: We hear over and over again about the financial problems of

the UN and the peacekeeping account is very seriously overdrawn, I believe, and you owe countries that have contributed troops something like 725 million dollars -- and God knows when they're going to get the money. How did countries -- why do countries continue to offer troops when there is no prospect of reimbursement?

MIYET: I would say here I would like to pay tribute to these countries which not only accept to bear the financial cost and it's a heavy cost for developing countries, but also to accept the human sacrifice that it entails. And I would like in particular for the American public opinion and the Congress to understand that when they are playing with the UN dues they are also playing against these countries who are in dire need of money and continue to accept to put staff, personnel at our disposal. Why do they do that? I think that's because they believe in the United Nations, its principle and its Charter. That's so simple. And they are ready at any given time to commit their personnel to try to achieve peace and security elsewhere. So this is remarkable and needs to be rewarded.

FASULO: Mr. Miyet, we know the Security Council recently approved a massive and sweeping operation in East Timor. In fact, I gather for the first time the UN will be running a territory, can you share with us some of the challenges that the operation will face and how the UN is preparing for it?

MIYET: It's not the first time it's the second time. With Kosovo, a very recent example, has been transferred the full responsibility to the United Nations to rule Kosovo for the years to come. As far as East Timor is concerned, the first challenge will be the necessity to rehabilitate, to restore the basic infrastructures, public utilities, public services in this country, and a country which has been devastated over the last weeks. The second challenge, which is linked to this, will be to get the personnel to do that. As you know, we have no in-house personnel able to be city managers, engineers, experts in all kinds of public activity so we have to rely on the support of the different agencies, institutions and governments able to provide them. This is a huge challenge. We have these difficulties in Kosovo. I hope that we will get support. The second point here is the question of security. We will have soon to replace the multinational force, the INTERFAET, led by Australia and to transform it in a UN peacekeeping operation. We have to find the troops, in particular from Asian countries, able to replace part of the existing troops and to provide the security guarantees for years to come, leading to their independence. This might be difficult because we don't know, up to this point, what will be the stance of these pro-integration militias

which have rampaged the territory over the last weeks. So here we can expect, and we hope full, cooperation by the Indonesian authority to try to rein in these militias.

FASULO: But just following up on that regarding East Timor – I just want to make sure I get this straight. In other words that the UN will be running the territory, administering it and leading it to independence whereas in Kosovo, Kosovo is being administered but it's within the authority of Yugoslavia. Is that not unprecedented for the UN to lead it to independence or are these ...

MIYET: In both cases this is what we call a Chapter 7 operation which means that the Special Representative of the Secretary-General will have full legislative and executive authority to run these territories. In the case of Kosovo, the Special Representative will have to lead this territory in order to achieve self-government for what is an autonomous province for the time being. There will be negotiations later on to decide on the future status in East Timor. It's just a little clearer but with the same executive and legislative authority based on the pre-existing law and trying to create the constitutional, legal, political and administrative basis for a fully independent East Timor.

DERGHAM: Mr. Miyet, in both the cases of Kosovo and East Timor, if I am not wrong, the United Nations peacekeepers came after the way was opened up by the NATO forces in Kosovo and the Australian-led forces in East Timor. Are you coming in with the legacy of what happened in Somalia after the UN peacekeepers came in in the aftermath of the American troops having opened the way? What fears have you got?

MIYET: I think I told you we have to be modest and at the same time effective. We are modest because we know, and it was referred to, we have no UN troops available overnight to be sent to any place in the world. We need to ask the governments to provide troops, to assemble the concept of operations and to move them. This always takes months before it's organized. When you ask a country to provide the bulk of the troops they have available already the capacity to do that. So based on the experience of Haiti, based on the experience of the Central African Republic, based on the experience of Somalia, it's better at some point if the Security Council agrees to have one country moving in with other countries, but very soon, and after that, being rehatted in the UN. We will do that with East Timor. We had also a resolution of the Security Council last week on Sierra Leone. We will rehat part of what we call the ECOMOGs, or Western African troops, in Sierra Leone that will become the UN troops within one to two months.

DERGHAM: I'm asking my question, though forgive me if I am a bit tough with you on this. The fact is that in Somalia, the UN came in and really did not have any successes -- some would say failure in fact. And you're playing second fiddle again in East Timor and Kosovo and I'm wondering if you're not coming in with the legacy of the past that is going to tie you up since you are unable to really say I'm the one who opened the road and I'm the one who can maintain it?

MIYET: It's clear that East Timor, like Somalia, like Kosovo, you were in a situation right at the beginning where you might have faced hostilities, war situations, fighting, etc. and we knew from Bosnia Herzegovina that you cannot ask the UN to make war, to engage into fighting activities. It's better to have a military international force with, would say, the capacity -- the military capacity -- and the political capacity, credibility to do that and when the situation is stabilized have a more traditional UN peacekeeping operation. This is a lesson of the past. The Secretary-General himself welcomed the multinational force. It's for us not a problem, it's a complementary key to our approach.

DERGHAM: Isn't that dangerous? Aren't you afraid -- cause as you are well aware, there are lots of countries who criticize the United Nations for being kept in the dark, for example, in Kosovo. I'm not saying they're right but you do know that several countries do oppose what they call this interventionist policy by groups such as NATO, by other multinational forces. You must be worried about what would happen to the UN in terms of peacekeeping in the question as follows: what peace to keep?

MIYET: I would say I would make a difference between Kosovo and East Timor. For East Timor, there was a clear resolution by the Security Council authorizing the multinational force and I would say at the request of the Secretary-General himself. So we are in a different kind of situation and there is control by the Security Council. There are reports made every 10 days or 15 days to the Security Council about what is going on, there is close cooperation right from the beginning between the Special Representative present in Dili and the Force Commander of this multinational force. So I would say here it's a cooperative approach and we are cooperating to transform these multinational forces into a UN peacekeeping operation with the full consent, and I would say more than that, pressure by the Australians in order that we take over as soon as possible.

FASULO: Mr. Miyet, can you talk a little bit about American participation in the various UN peacekeeping operations? We know the operations are multi-faceted in the sense

that there are soldiers, military observers and also civilian police, where do the Americans fit in today?

MIYET: As far as the United Nations are concerned, I would say on the military side it has American troops. The Army is very much involved in Bosnia Herzegovina, in Kosovo. There are difficulties to mobilize troops from other contingent and it is true I would say for other countries, which are European countries, heavily mobilized for former Yugoslavia. But you have also 200 American troops working with the INTERFAET in East Timor and we have military observers in many places and we have many civilian police officers present, in particular in Kosovo or in Bosnia Herzegovina, but you know other missions too.

DERGHAM: But not soldiers, right?

MIYET: Military observers but not formal contingents.

LITTLEJOHNS: This is **World Chronicle.** Our guest is Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet.

Mr. Miyet, you mentioned Sierra Leone is the UN able to do anything about the terrible crimes that were committed in the civil war in Sierra Leone – amputations of children's hands, arms, and so forth? Are these people going to get away scot-free or can the UN, the peacekeepers do something about that?

MIYET: Actually, on this there has been a peace agreement and our actions will be integrated in the different work of this peace agreement. And besides the role of the peacekeepers, in order to try to implement the cease-fire, to ensure disarmament of all the forces and to promote the reconciliations between the different parties, there will be a role in our missions with human rights officers who will try to help set up the truth and reconciliation commissions. We will try to set up, I would say, local institutions and support the NGO's in their efforts. We will have in our mission for the first time a component dedicated to child protection because of the major problems say first of amputees – and even babies and kids have been really maimed in conditions which are tragic and unbearable even. But we have to also try to reintegrate in the societies all these child soldiers which therefore most of them are lost children and you have to find a way to reintegrate them back in the society. So we will do our utmost. On the other side, Mrs. Robinson, the High Commissioner for Human Rights, on her part, is also dealing with these questions, making inquiries and supporting all these processes in terms of promoting the respect for human

rights. For the critical questions that you raised, the Amnesty Law, which is integrated in the peace agreement, on this part the United Nations made a reservation about this particular paragraph explaining that in any case it cannot be construed as not respecting the international covenants on human rights and, in particular, crimes against humanity. But I would say these have been long-debated questions, way beyond the non-governmental organizations about these ideas but it has been the firm decision by all the Sierra Leoneans themselves to follow the route of peace and in their mind this was the only way. So let's try to avoid impunity in the end but at the same time let's hope that the Sierra Leonean themselves will find a way to solve these problems.

DERGHAM: I wonder if you – another peace where you really are very heavily involved as UN peacekeepers, another area after East Timor and Kosovo, it seems that Lebanon, Southern Lebanon, is going to have a very large operation there. I know that there are different complexities, political complexities in each and every part of the world where you're dealing. In Lebanon, we have the new Israeli Prime Minister, Mr. Ehud Barak, who is saying by next July the Israelis will pull out of Lebanon one way or another. Now that leaves still the UN peacekeepers known as UNIFIL, out there. What contingency plans do you have?

MIYET: So it's a question of which we haven't been made aware by declarations, statements made first by Prime Minister Netanyahu a few months ago and now by the new Prime Minister Ehud Barak. It's a question which is important and that we might have some points to look after. It's clear that our operation is a purely military one for the time being which is to try to observe and preserve the cease-fire and I think there has been an achievement even if there are, from time to time, disrespect for the cease-fire. I think that the presence of UNIFIL has been positive in any case for the region. It's now, I think, that there are discussions and attempts to move forward the peace process via the Lebanese – Israeli-Lebanese and the Israeli-Syrian tracks and we hope that this is a good omen and we try to move forward. And in this context I think that these questions of early withdrawal that might be advanced ....

DERGHAM: No but I'm sorry. I'm not speaking in the context of a political agreement. I'm saying if the Israelis pull out of Lebanon outside of a political agreement what would happen to the 4,000 troops working with UNIFIL? Do you have contingency plans for that?

MIYET: This is something that we will have to face. There has been discussion for the time being but no one has been approached by the parties in order to know and to tell us this will happen. So for the time being we are just expecting that the feeling is that this would move more easily if there was a link between this request and the political process on the dual Lebanese/Israeli and Syrian/Israeli tracks.

FASULO: Mr. Miyet, we know the Council recently voted the two new operations -- in Sierra Leone and, more recently, in East Timor. We also hear that the prospects for another operation is looming in the Congo and it's projected to be a major one. Can you share some of the contingency planning that's going on regarding that operation?

MIYET: We already have a decision by the Security Council to deploy up to 90 military liaison officers to all capitals and advance headquarters of the countries, government troops and rebel troops involved in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Out of these 90 military liaison officers almost 40 are already in every capital and we are supposed in the days to come to send technical assistance assessment teams first to see where we can despatch immediately the 50 remaining military liaison officers within the territory of Congo, in the Eastern part of Congo, and to see how we could deploy very soon up to 500 military observers that we have planned in a report which was issued a few months ago and to reflect on what might be the concept of operations of larger peacekeeping operations if the Security Council will decide. We will have a good idea of what might be the size, the mandate, the problems that we face by mid-December when this technical team will have toured all the region.

FASULO: But the sense is it will be what? 10,000, 12,000 -- a major size operation?

MIYET: Yes, it will be a major size operation because of the size of the country, the number of troops and different troops involved and the difficulties to move around in the Eastern Congo.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Miyet, another African country, a very large one -- Angola -- the United Nations had an operation in Angola but it's been very greatly reduced because apparently the government of Angola was not very happy with the way things were being done and, of course, UNITA, the rebel force, naturally never approved of what the UN is involved in. What's the situation with Angola now?

MIYET: For the time being, we have reduced very dramatically our presence

because I would say none of the parties believe that the UN could make a difference at that point. We could not move anymore in UNITA -held areas and the government believed that we are not assertive enough even if it was not directly in our mandate to dissolve the UNITA forces all over the country. For the time being the situation is still war between the Government and UNITA. We have, it seems, some recent successes by the government forces. I think that it's not the time when the other parties, at least the government, believe that the solution is at the negotiating table.

LITTLEJOHNS: Do you feel that the UN did all it could do in the circumstances?

MIYET: I would say you can't always say that what you did was the best thing that you could do. Here, too, we say we can take some lessons of what we did. Maybe at some point we withdrew too early some of our presence out of the country at a time when it was maybe more crucial to maintain troops. Here, too, there is pressure on the Security Council based on financial budgetary reasons. The second reason also, and this is true for most operations, it's the lack of intelligence information from the United Nations. This is a point which hampers, hinders most of our activities. We experienced that in Angola where we didn't know exactly what was the level of force of UNITA, within the country or outside the country, where they were supplying arms, where they were trading diamonds. We had the same problems I would say also during the last crisis in Sierra Leone where we had no real information of the capacity of the rebels to take over Freetown a few days before. On the contrary, the information that we had was that the situation was rather stabilized. This is a real weakness for us.

DERGHAM: So when the Secretary-General speaks of humanitarian intervention, or intervention as he did during the General Assembly, he created a lot of controversy about the issue of intervention. Can you, as UN peacekeeping, can you do it without different yardsticks? Can you really implement the intervention that the Secretary-General has in mind or do you have to be at the mercy of groups from regional groups?

MIYET: It's clear that what the Secretary-General -- what we do is always done according to the Charter, according to the mandate given by the Security Council. The Secretary-General does not imagine to decide by himself to intervene so when you come back to this point it means that there is a need for consensus in the Security Council and he is pressing very hard to convince the governments that they have to take a pro-active stance on

these questions to try to reach consensus and to be maybe more forceful than they have been in the past to take full responsibility when such situations occur.

LITTLEJOHNS: The mandates that you get from the Security Council are satisfactory?

MIYET: It depends in many cases. I would say that during the recent period when you go to Kosovo, to East Timor, to Sierra Leone we got the mandates that we wanted to get and I hope that it's a good sign for the future.

LITTLEJOHNS: Mr. Miyet, that's all the time we have. Thank you for being with us on this edition of **World Chronicle**. Our guest has been Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Bernard Miyet. He was interviewed by Linda Fasulo of *NBC News* and Raghida Dergham of *Al-Hayat of London*. I'm Michael Littlejohns. Thank you for joining us. We invite you to be with us for the next edition of **World Chronicle.**

ANNOUNCER: Transcripts of the program may be obtained free of charge by sending a stamped self addressed envelope to **World Chronicle**, United Nations, Room S -827, New York New York 10017.

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